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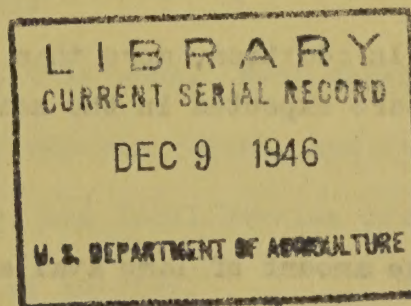
Timely Topics for the Food Page Editor

April 2, 1946

SHOPPING LIST

Citrus fruits are still the best fruit buy on the market throughout most of the seven-state area served by USDA's Production and Marketing Administration office in Dallas, but avacados and strawberries are vying for attention. Irish potatoes and lettuce are the vegetable leaders, but cauliflower, celery, carrots and cabbage are also good buys. Spinach and other greens rate attention in some areas.

Early April should bring onions and new crop beans from Texas and spring shallots from Louisiana.



(More)

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FISH LINES

First soft shell crabs and crayfish (or crawfish) of the season appeared on Gulf Coast markets this week, according to the Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service at New Orleans. These, together with the turtles that are now coming in nicely, gave homemakers a choice of something out of the ordinary.

Another item of good news on fish is the large increase in landings of the prized red snapper. Crabmeat and hard crabs continue rather plentiful, shrimp scarce. Oyster production is satisfactory generally, but canning operations, now in full swing, are cutting into supplies for the fresh market.

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BRING ON THE CRACKERS

The Combined Food Board recently recommended allocation to the United States of 250,000 cases of canned sardines from Portugal and its colonies and 75,000 cases from Spain and its colonies. This is an increase of more than 50 percent over the quantities available from these sources last year. In addition, more than 207,000 cases of sild sardines (herring) from Norway are expected in the near future.

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COUNTING SHEEP

The amount of lamb available for Easter shoppers may be as plentiful as in recent years, but the reason isn't greater production. Down about 13 percent compared with 1945, this year's early spring lamb crop is the smallest in nearly 20 years. However, sheep growers may push their lambs to market in order to get them sold before the subsidy payments on sheep and lambs end-- according to the present schedule on June 30.

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ONION DATA

About April 4, USDA's Production and Marketing Administration is opening its seasonal onion market news office in Laredo, Texas. Eugene Paulson will be in charge. Women's editors who wish copies of his daily reports on prices, supplies, volume of movement, and other similar information, should address him in care of the Hamilton Hotel.

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SHIPS THAT MEET

More olive oil is in prospect for American homemakers during the next three months. USDA has worked out an exchange plan with Syria and Lebanon under which we send them soybean oil and they send us olive oil. During the April-June quarter we expect to exchange 200 metric tons of soybean oil with each of these two countries for an equal amount of olive oil.

A few weeks ago a similar exchange with Greece brought us the first olive oil we'd had in this country for about a year.

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STRAWBERRY POINTERS

Strawberries are the up-and-coming fruit this week. Most markets received their first supplies of the season--by express, truck, and rail. The volume from Louisiana is gradually increasing, and local berries are now available at some Texas markets. Prices are at ceiling.

Selection rule calls for solid red color and a bright, clean appearance, with caps and stems of fresh green. Decay, mold, shrinkage--or the white spots that develop when the berries are picked before they're mature--should be avoided. Because of their high perishability, it isn't a good idea to buy more strawberries than can be used at once time. Careful washing just before the berries are used is another must. The green caps come off after the berries are washed.

With their unmatched flavor and their wealth of vitamin C, strawberries are at their nutritive best when they're served raw. Besides the ever-popular strawberry shortcake, there's a plain dish of strawberries in whipped cream, or a garnish of bright red strawberries for desserts and salads. Or the berries may grace the morning dish of cereal.

Then, of course, if strawberries must be cooked, there's strawberry pie. And surplus berries made into jam or preserves provide a tasty treat to look forward to next winter.

Historically, reference to the cultivation of strawberries, which grow wild in both the Old and New worlds, are found as far back as the medieval period. A few centuries later, Shakespeare mentioned them. The strawberries grown in the United States are mainly hybrids, developed from the mild-flavored "Chile" strawberries of the Pacific Coast of South America and crossed with the smaller but more highly flavored wild Virginian or "Scarlet" variety of eastern North America. Strawberry production on a commercial scale began about the middle of the nineteenth century.

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SOUR NOTE ON A SWEET SUBJECT

Honey, to supplement tight sugar supplies, has gone to the scarce list--temporarily it's hoped. It's the end-of-the-season, and honey supplies are just about exhausted in all sections of the country, USDA's marketing specialists tell us. Some bottlers still have enough to carry them into the early summer, but many are closing down until new honey is available.

What's more, very little imported honey can be obtained to supplement our home supply--because producers can get higher prices in other countries than they can in the United States.

Encouraging note is that spring weather so far has been fairly favorable for the bees in most areas. In general they have gone through the winter in good condition, though they've drawn heavily on their store of honey to do it.

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EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY

A year of outstanding food developments, 1945 lifted turkeys out of their holiday exclusiveness and made them the piece de resistance for every day meals. Turkeys from the 1945 record production of 44,330,000 birds are still available in canned or frozen form. In addition, producers at the present time are selling off large numbers of their breeder hens because of the short feed supply. All this spells plenty of turkey for homemakers who like to make every meal a special occasion at reasonable cost.

The trend toward earlier hatchings in recent years reached a peak in 1945, resulting in more even distribution of the supply throughout the season. Increasing numbers of broad-breasted birds placed more heavy weights on the market and resulted in the new practice of selling half-birds in many localities.

With consumers on the benefiting side of the situation, USDA recently announced plans to help farmers carry out their flock reduction program in orderly fashion. To do this, the Department stands ready to buy dressed turkeys at prices which will reflect a support level to producers of 90 percent of parity for live birds. Turkeys bought under this program will be resold into commercial channels or for export, distributed to school lunch rooms and institutions, or canned.

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EQUIPMENT NEWS

Action to help speed the appearance of such household items as refrigerators, washing machines, oilcloth and linoleum came this week with USDA's assurance that flaxseed producers will receive support prices for their 1946 crop. Linseed oil made from flaxseed is essential in the manufacture of many of these products.

However, USDA warned that shortages may be further aggravated unless farmers sell the 1945-crop flaxseed they still hold on farms. The present supply of linseed oil is such that manufacturers are permitted to use only three-fourths of the amount they used before the war.

SHARPEN THE HOE

We'll plant more Victory gardens this year than in any year of the war if we meet the goal set by the National Garden Conference last week. Because the need is greater this year, garden leaders recommended 20 million home gardens--an increase of 10 percent over last year's 18,400,000.

"The more gardens we have, the more food we can send abroad, and the more lives we can save," is the way Chester C. Davis, chairman of the Famine Emergency Committee looks at the situation. Secretary of Commerce Henry A. Wallace told the Conference more people are faced with hunger during the next three months than in any like period in history.

Aside from the humanitarian standpoint, there's an angle on gardens that will be of particular interest to homemakers. This comes from John W. Snyder, Director of War Mobilization and Reconversion, who considers Victory gardens one of the best ways to prevent inflation of food prices and help hold down the cost of living while demand for food is at an all-time high.

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Timely Topics for the Food Page Editor

DEC 9 1946

April 9, 1946

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FRESH FOOD ROUND-UP

The potato bin continues to be the most popular spot in most grocery stores. Both new and old potatoes are available in good supply to help homemakers cut down on the use of bread. Carrots are another leader among this week's best buys, chosen by USDA's Production and Marketing Administration for their relative abundance and reasonable price. Other items in this group include cabbage, celery and grapefruit.

Beets deserve more attention than they're getting. Supplies are still good at costs that are kind to the food budget. And beets, with their bright red color, are easily adaptable in salads, on the relish tray, or served alone as a lunch or dinner vegetable in their own right.

New crop onions and beans from the lower Rio Grande Valley are moving in small quantities that will increase during the next few weeks. Asparagus supplies are growing and prices have gone down a little. Local squash is available at southern markets and Florida offerings can be bought at others.

(More)

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Radishes are another home-grown vegetable that's increasing in popularity as the season progresses.

Strawberry supplies so far have been snapped up as fast as they were available, and the price is still ceiling except on some off-quality offerings that were shipped before they were ripe enough. The supply of oranges has decreased, and most other fruits are conspicuous by their absence. A few pears from Argentina showed up in New Orleans, and Cuban pineapples continue popular throughout the South and Middle West. Avacados, at steady prices, are among the best selections. Arrivals of bananas from central America are increasing slowly, but the supply is still short of demand.

Spinach is selling at the lowest price in several months, with good supplies available from several producing areas. Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas are shipping spinach to markets throughout the Middle West and Rocky Mountain States, and good supplies are on hand for home use. Large quantities of spinach are being canned, but some that was planted for canning is being diverted to the fresh market. Canneries are unable to use as much as they expected because of short tin supplies and labor difficulties.

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CABBAGE PROSPECTS

If farmers carry out their present plans for this year's cabbage crop, supplies should hold up well throughout 1946. Acreage for sale to the fresh market is expected to be about 5 percent smaller than the acreage harvested last year, but about 16 percent above the 10-year (1935-44) average. Weather, labor conditions, and other factors may affect the final outturn, of course.

At present, cabbage is one of the best fresh vegetable buys in the seven-state southwest area, where good supplies are available from Texas and Louisiana producing areas.

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AT THE DAIRY COUNTER

Supplies of some dairy products increased during the past month, but others became even scarcer.

Butter was one of the less plentiful items, as far as homemakers were concerned. There was no appreciable change in the short supply situation on Cheddar cheese, but more of the Swedish Munster and Edam varieties were available.

All metropolitan areas reported enough fresh milk to satisfy consumer demands, but evaporated milk was shorter and the sweetened condensed kinds were extremely scarce.

Prices for all dairy products show no signs of a decline.

FAMINE FIGHTERS

Here's an encouraging thought homemakers might enjoy mulling over as they help to plant the nation's 20 million Victory gardens this year.

We're sending about 200 million pounds of field, cereal and vegetable seeds to the wartorn countries in the first half of 1946, according to the department's seed marketing officials.

In terms of food, one pound of vegetable seeds means a thousand pounds or more of vegetables to help feed the world's hungry people.

GARDEN PREFERENCES

Vegetables preferred by city and other non-farm gardeners in 1945 include--in the order of frequency of planting--tomatoes, string or wax beans, onions, lettuce, radishes, beets, and carrots. USDA's Bureau of Agricultural Economics says each of these seven vegetables grew in more than half the non-farm gardens last year.

In farm gardens, where more space was available, more than half the gardens also included potatoes, cabbage, green peas, sweet corn and cucumbers.

Secretary of Agriculture Anderson recently told the National Garden Conference that as much as 40 percent of our fresh vegetable supply came from Victory gardens during the war years.

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MEAT NEWS

Homemakers with a taste for fancy meats may look for continued improvement in supply as a result of the latest amendment to the meat set-aside order.

This amendment, effective March 31, removes all set-aside provisions on Choice and Good grades of beef. On March 17 the percentage of these two grades which specified slaughterers were required to set aside was reduced from 30 to 20 percent.

Choice and Good grade beef set aside under this order during the war years was bought mostly by the Army, which now has adequate supplies and is able to fill future needs in the open market. Foreign needs are being filled mostly with the lower grades of beef, leaving most of the seasonally increased production of the top grades for home use.

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CANNING NOTES

The critical need for home preservation of foods this year is increased by the shortage of tin which may hamper commercial canning operations considerably, according to recent estimates of the Civilian Production Administration and the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Fortunately, the supply of glass containers, rubber or rubber composition rings, and closures will be adequate for extensive home canning operations to supplement preservation by freezing and drying.

Reduced output of steel mills this spring resulted in a loss of about one-ninth of the anticipated 1946 production of tin plate. This condition necessitated a reduction of about a third in the amount of canned goods we had expected to send to Europe and Asia. Supplies of commercially canned foods for domestic use also will be considerably lower in spite of the fact that tin for both commercial and home canning has top priority.

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ON THE SCARCE LIST

The supply of dry beans and peas continues to dwindle. During the April-June quarter homemakers may expect a total of about 900,000 hundred-pound bags of beans and 60,000 bags of peas. Supplies for allocation to all groups (civilians, Armed services, export) are only about a fourth of what they were in the second quarter of 1945.

Unusually early movement of the short 1945 bean crop is one reason for the sharp decrease in present supplies. The 1945 crop of peas also was small and has been drawn on heavily during previous quarters for supplies to meet urgent foreign needs.

A large part of this quarter's foreign needs also will be filled with peas, which are not as popular in U. S. civilian diets as beans, and which appear to be in relatively better supply, though far below the actual demand. With a substantial quantity of peas already in civilian distribution channels, it's expected we'll be able to export nearly a million bags this quarter. No beans are allocated for export, though some shipments probably will be made on previous commitments.

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SPEED'S THE KEYNOTE

There's encouragement, as well as a note of urgency, in the report on conditions in France, French North Africa and Italy which former President Hoover and Dr. D. A. FitzGerald, Director of USDA's Office of Requirements and Allocations, made following their recent survey.

"Difficult but not intolerable" indicates that hunger has not yet reached a stage so advanced as to put the people beyond reach of help. It means, according to Chester C. Davis, Chairman of the Famine Emergency Committee, that food shipped from this country now--or soon--can arrive in time to prevent mass starvation.

Between April 1 and the middle of June or July, when new crop supplies will be available, France needs 1,050,000 tons of wheat or wheat substitutes; French North Africa needs 250,000 tons, and Italy 650,000 tons.

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COUNTING CALORIES

For a reducing diet keyed to the times, USDA's Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics suggests almost no grain food, substitution of fruits and custards for baked desserts, sparing use of sugar and all other sweets, omission of fried foods and salad dressings, milk instead of cream in coffee.

The protective B-vitamin vegetables--especially seed vegetables such as peas, lima beans and corn--are needed more than ever to offset the reduction in cereals. Other fruits and vegetables (including potatoes) should be used liberally. Another must is plenty of protein foods. Good supplies are available in the form of milk, eggs and poultry.

Many people, of course, should not attempt to reduce except under a physician's guidance. For others BHNHE nutritionists suggest at least 10 percent above average weight before efforts are made to reduce.

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Timely Topics for the Food Page Editor

DEC 9 1946

April 15, 1946

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
EASTER EGGS

Eggs are plentiful for this year's Easter dinner. They're reasonably priced, too, and rate liberal use. The traditional Easter egg hunt may not be in order, though, because the world food situation in general makes it imperative to prevent waste of any kind.

Eggs are a protective food, and with other plentiful items such as potatoes, oatmeal, and fresh vegetables, go a long way toward replacing bread. Dried eggs are being sent to the starvation areas. Fresh eggs do their part on the home front because when they're served often they release flour and wheat for shipment abroad.

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PRODUCE LEADERS

Best vegetable buys this week are cabbage, Irish potatoes and celery, the Production and Marketing Administration's weekly survey shows. Grapefruit is the best fruit buy, with oranges a fair choice over most of the seven-state area.

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Other good selections include spinach, lettuce, carrots and beets. Green beans appeared on the list for the first time this season, but were among the best selections only at extreme southern markets. It will be the latter part of the month before supplies are available in any volume. Squash and radishes are becoming more popular as supplies increase. These are among the best selections at markets near areas of local production.

Rhubarb and avacados are good buys at some markets. Strawberries continue in good demand with no surplus supplies.

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ONIONS ON THE MOVE

Count on carload shipments of the new onion crop during the first week of movement indicates supplies in consuming channels should increase rapidly during the next few weeks. During the first week of April, shipments ranged from one to ten cars daily. Loadings mounted rapidly until now they're running 125 to 150 cars a day.

So far the demand has been far in excess of the supply and distributors have voluntarily rationed receipts to their customers so the onions would go round. But the harvest is off to a rapid start and the onion drought is definitely broken.

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PINEAPPLE PICTURE

Pineapples are available at most markets in this area to help fill present fruit needs. Supplies, which usually hit the peak of the season in late April, should be better this year than in 1945. Reason is a much larger crop in Cuba, which with Puerto Rico and Mexico furnishes most of our fresh pineapples. About half of Cuba's estimated production of three million crates may find its way into American markets this spring. Shipments have been arriving since March and will continue through July.

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SWEET POTATO OUTLOOK

Looking ahead to next winter's food supply, USDA recently announced a support price and loan program for the 1946 crop of sweet potatoes. This program is designed to support a price to growers of not less than 90 percent of parity, and should encourage the production of ample supplies.

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BEST FISH BUYS

Fish counters continue to be well supplied, and some selections are a little cheaper than they have been, according to the Department of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service in New Orleans. However, the most plentiful offerings are not the most popular ones. For instance, the prized red snapper, which is just beginning to show up along the Texas coast, is still scarce at most markets, with prices generally unchanged. Other scarce items include spotted trout and redfish. Homemakers may find the less well-known varieties which are somewhat more plentiful a bit easier on the budget.

The past week brought better supplies of shrimp than have been available in a good while. Landings along the Gulf coast increased in early April following a period of very low production. The increase was only fair, however, and homemakers still may not be able to find as much shrimp as they'd like to buy.

Hard crabs and crabmeat are abundant and some nice soft shell crabs are also available. There are plenty of crayfish and some of the larger markets will have turtles, which may be sold either whole or as turtle meat. Then, too, there are some of the famed diamond-back terrapins scattered here and there.

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CANNED FISH PROSPECTS

Supplies of canned fish are expected to be larger this year than in 1945--by about 70 million pounds--and homemakers will find most of the increased

production at their grocer's. Consumers will get a total of about 480 million pounds of all types of canned fish during 1946 compared with 410 million pounds last year if the greater catch materializes.

However, Government, military, and relief needs are about as high as they were last year, and canners will set aside good quantities for this purpose. Between April 1, 1946, and March 31, 1947, they'll reserve 33 percent of most varieties of salmon and 45 percent of pilchards, Atlantic mackerel and sea herring, and Pacific mackerel.

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POULTRY IN CANS

Poultry canning operations are at a high peacetime level. In January 1946, for instance, 13,020,000 pounds of poultry and turkey went into cans. The February total was 11,403,000 pounds on a dressed weight basis. During all of 1945 the volume canned reached 146.5 million pounds, compared with 131.8 million in 1944. Record month of poultry canning was May 1945 when 20 million pounds went that route.

Dressed poultry also continues plentiful. Both storage supplies and live offerings are heavy, and deserve favorable consideration for Easter dinners.

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WORLD'S BEEF

The world's beef supply will be smaller this year than it was in 1945, judging by the latest cattle inventory. Preliminary reports indicate a decrease in cattle numbers of about two million head in North America and about six million in Europe the past year. This will more than offset an estimated increase of 3.7 million head in the Soviet Union. There are no significant changes elsewhere, though small increases may occur in some of the countries where supplies were depleted during the war.

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PROGRESS REPORT

As we enter the most critical period in the world food crisis during the next 60 to 90 days, a progress report on where we stand is in order. This check-up emphasizes more than ever the need for increased efforts all along the line.

Here's how we stand on wheat and flour shipments. We had an export goal of three million tons for the first quarter of this year, but we shipped only 2,687,000 tons. That's 313,000 tons short of the quarter's goal. We must make up the difference during the next three months if we achieve a January-June goal of six million tons.

This won't be easy because new crop supplies will not be available until summer and we're getting to the bottom of the barrel on old stocks. The task is not impossible, though, if homemakers cooperate with processors, food handlers and farmers. The homemaker's job is to prevent waste by buying and using food intelligently--and thus to stretch supplies of the critical foods so we'll have more to share with the starving people abroad.

Encouragement comes with USDA's latest Crop Report released on April 11. Our winter wheat crop is now estimated at 831 million bushels--80 million more than the estimate made last December 1. Reports on rye, oats and barley are also favorable..

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RICE NEEDS

A serious rice shortage threatens many of the Asiatic countries where this cereal is the staple diet. The scarcity will become even more acute in the next few months as stocks from the small 1945-46 harvest are used up. Famine already prevails in some areas, especially those which were invaded.

Localities which have small surplus supplies have had difficulty transporting them to shortage areas. China's need is the greatest in Asia. Japan--

in peacetime the world's third largest rice producer--also has a critical rice shortage.

Considerable rice imports are needed in the Philippine Islands, British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies. Droughts in Ceylon and India have affected the rice harvests in those countries and thus rendered the world shortage more severe.

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FLOUR STORAGE

Rumors that some homemakers are hoarding flour suggest re-emphasis on the fact that flour does not keep for long periods under ordinary home storage. Aside from the waste of food that is needed to prevent starvation among our neighbors of the world, homemakers who hoard flour put an extra strain on their own food budgets.

In warm weather the temperature in homes and apartments is conducive to weevil infestation. In many homes, especially apartments, flour is often stored on high shelves, where the temperature is above the average of the room. This increases the danger of spoilage. And flour can't be kept in the refrigerator because it takes up moisture.

Solution is to buy only the amount of flour that can be used before it spoils, and keep it as carefully as possible.

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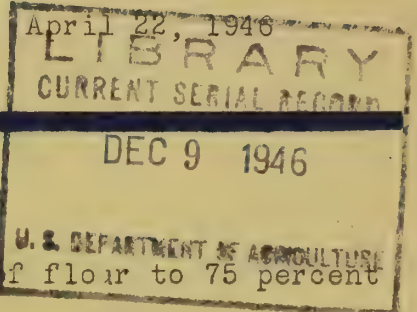
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Timely Topics for the Food Page Editor



FULL SPEED AHEAD

Action taken this week-end to limit domestic use of the amount used in the corresponding period last year is a measure to increase the speed with which we're able to send supplies to the famine areas. It does not take the place of voluntary conservation--but rather emphasizes the increased need for extreme care in the use of bread and cereal products by every homemaker.

Secretary of Agriculture Anderson recently presented to the Senate Small Business Committee what he called a balance sheet covering the domestic wheat situation. His first figure, 689 million bushels, represented stocks on hand January 1. Against that he charged 90 million bushels for feed, 23 million for seed, a carryover on July 1 of 150 million bushels, and 250 million bushels for food. This left just 176 million bushels available for export, if we continue to consume wheat at a normal rate. Since our export goal is 225 million, the Secretary pointed out that there is a difference of 49 million bushels which must be squeezed out of our own consumption and our carryover.

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These supplies are needed now--within the next 60 to 90 days. Under voluntary conservation alone, the time required for reduced demand at the retail level to reflect itself in wheat and flour available for export might be detrimental to the entire program. The limitation order will help to make voluntary conservation more effective. In addition, the order will doubtless help some of the small millers to get a fair share of the available wheat, resulting in more equitable distribution of both wheat and flour.

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SPRING FOOD PROSPECTS

In a recent summary of the nation's food situation, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics estimated somewhat larger civilian food supplies of eggs, dairy products, fish and fresh vegetables during the next few months. This would be a seasonal increase during the peak production period.

As a result, total spring and early summer food supplies compare very favorably with the quantities available to civilians during the same period last year. However, temporary shortages of some foods may develop as a result of the high domestic demand and increased exports.

Fats and oils will remain short. Butter, margarine and sugar are expected to be definitely shorter than a year ago. There will be less meat due to seasonal decreases in production and heavy procurement for relief use abroad. Fruit supplies are not expected to change much.

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FRESH FOOD SELECTIONS

Vegetable supplies continued to increase during the past week, and several new items were added to the Production and Marketing Administration's list of best buys. English peas and tomatoes were important newcomers. Texas tomatoes started moving to supplement supplies from Mexico and Florida, but the volume probably will not be heavy before the end of April. Green beans

are later than usual, but supplies are increasing right along and their position on the best buy list is climbing. Asparagus is near the peak of the season.

Early spring potatoes from the Lower Rio Grande Valley are on hand in good volume and are a popular vegetable choice, though they're still in keen competition with plentiful supplies from the old crop. Cabbage, carrots, celery and lettuce remain among the best selections at most markets. Spinach and beets, old-timers on the list, still are popular.

Grapofruit and oranges are the best fruit buys with supplies plentiful at reasonable prices. Strawberries still are very popular although prices went up after ceilings were lifted. First Arkansas berries were offered to supplement supplies from Louisiana and Texas. Avacados continue among the best fruit buys at occasional markets.

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TRUCK CROP REPORTS

Supplies of early vegetables this year may exceed those for the same period in 1945 by 10 percent and the 10-year (1935-44) average by nearly 50 percent if weather and growing conditions are favorable. Acreage is up 8 percent over 1945 and 20 percent above average in the early planted areas which account for 60 to 65 percent of the total spring truck crops produced for the commercial market.

Output from later spring areas is also expected to increase this year, with recent estimates on about 80 to 85 percent of the total spring acreage placed 13 percent above that of last spring and 25 percent above average.

A summer production of cabbage, onions and watermelons about 10 percent more than last year is expected. The cabbage acreage is smaller than last year, but the other two crops are well above.

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MEAT OUTLOOK

Supplies of meat available to U. S. civilians during the April-June quarter are expected to be 4,558,400,000 pounds. This is 22 percent more than estimated consumption in the comparable period of 1945, but is about 9 percent less than the near record level in the quarter just past.

Homemakers should be able to buy about as much beef and veal as in the January-March period, but may find less pork, lamb and mutton. Consumption rate, figured on an annual basis, will be about 132 pounds per person, compared with 147 pounds in the January-March period of this year, and 116 pounds for the second quarter of 1945.

Meat reserved for civilians represents about 85 percent of the total supply for the next three months. U. S. military and war services will get 314,400,000 pounds, foreign shipments and U. S. territories 487,700,000 pounds.

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THE FISH STORY

The Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service in New Orleans reports most seafood a little more plentiful this week. Supplies of shellfish include more shrimp, as many oysters as in any winter month, crabs and crab-meat in good quantity. Red snapper, spotted trout and redfish remain rather scarce, but other varieties of fresh fish are fairly plentiful. These not-so-well-known kinds are cheaper in price, too, and make excellent contributions to wholesome, good-tasting meals.

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DAIRY PRODUCTS OUTLOOK

A program to maintain high production of milk and other dairy products during May and June and at the same time hold consumer prices at present levels was put into effect last week.

This program, announced by Choster Bowles, Director of Economic Stabilization, will help producers meet increased production costs by holding the May 1 reduction in dairy production payment rates to only a portion of the scheduled amount. Compared with last year the subsidy rate on milk will be 20 cents per hundredweight higher, on butterfat 5 cents a pound higher.

Whether additional increases scheduled for July 1 will result in a price advance to the consumer or will be paid through subsidies will depend on congressional action with respect to the authority of the OES to subsidize production in the fiscal year 1946-1947.

The present program is also aimed at increasing the supply of butter in retail stores by restoring allocation controls which will channel more of the nation's overall supply of butterfat into the manufacture of butter. Since removal of the WFA limitation orders after V-J Day, large quantities of butterfat have been diverted from butter manufacture to such products as ice cream, whipping cream and the like.

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COFFEE SUPPLIES

Good supplies of coffee continue to arrive under the subsidy program. This plan provides for payment to qualified importers of 3 cents per pound of green coffee. A recent amendment increased the total amount which might be bought under the program from 6,000,000 to 13,000,000 bags. Through the first week of April approximately 2,315,000 bags--or 33 percent of the additional 7,000,000 bags provided for--were bought.

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CANNED FOOD SUPPLIES

Present supplies of commercially canned peas, snap beans, corn, beets, and carrots are good. High grade offerings are short, however, because this quality sold out quickly the past fall and winter.

Canned whole tomatoes are still very scarce in any quality. Shortage of labor in canneries last year to hand-peel the tomatoes is the reason. However, there are still plenty of tomato products such as catsup, tomato sauce, and juice, which could be processed mechanically after the tomatoes were washed, sorted and trimmed.

Most of the 1945 pack of commercially canned vegetables is in the hands of distributors, who are doing everything possible to maintain a continuous supply on grocer's shelves until the new pack is available. The 1946-47 pack, given favorable weather and labor conditions, should be just as large as that of last year.

However, the supply of whole canned tomatoes and some other vegetables may still be short of the continued high demand--and it's a wise homemaker who assures her family the selection and quantity of canned vegetables desired next winter by putting up home canned supplies this summer.

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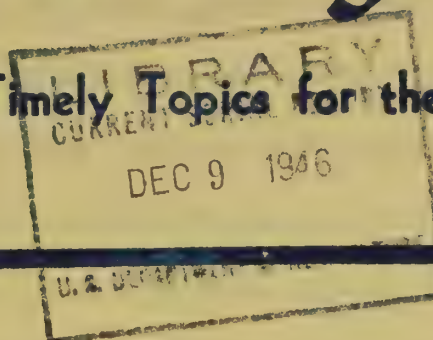
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Information Service
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Timely Topics for the Food Page Editor



April 29, 1946

VEGETABLE PARADE

The first week of May finds vegetable bins stocked with increasing supplies and a greater variety of items from spring producing areas. Green corn and cucumbers, which made their first appearance of the season during the past ten days, are now rolling out of the Lower Rio Grande Valley in carload quantities. Grocers throughout this area should be well supplied the early part of May.

Tomato shipments, which have increased steadily since mid-April, will reach volume proportions in the ^{next} week or so. Supplies already are heavy enough to place tomatoes in the "best buy" group at a few markets. Many of the beans from early producing areas are headed for commercial canners, but supplies on the fresh market are fair and should increase as more areas start picking early in May. Squash is another good buy, especially in southern areas. English peas, okra, radishes, and other locally produced vegetables are also available, though not in large commercial quantities as yet.

(more)

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Spinach from Arkansas and Oklahoma producing sections is the best green vegetable buy except where mustard and turnip greens are available locally. The asparagus season is in full swing, with local supplies about at the peak and offerings from western areas also available. Cabbage is still a popular item with local offerings in good supply. The next two weeks are expected to be the period of heaviest movement from the important Louisiana crop.

The very best vegetable buy of the week is potatoes, with both new and old crop supplies available in liberal amounts. From the budget standpoint, carrots and lettuce also are better selections than most of the newer vegetables that have made their first 1946 appearance in the last few weeks. Early onions are about at the peak of the season. Cauliflower is another old-timer which continues to maintain its popularity on the best buy list.

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POTATOES--NEW AND OLD

Typically spring is the menu that features new Irish potatoes cooked on top of fresh string beans, or new Irish potatoes boiled whole and buttered, or cooked in milk. Good as the old potatoes are (and they're still plentiful too), they lack the appeal of newly-harvested offerings when it comes to shifting meals out of wintertime monotony into the tempting freshness needed to pamper finicky springtime appetites.

Grocers throughout the area have good supplies of these thin-skinned red and white potatoes fresh from the fields of southern producing states. Favorable weather for harvest of the early crop this spring resulted in a spurt of shipments from the Texas Lower Rio Grande Valley that reached more than 1600 carloads by the third week of April. Large quantities from this section will continue to move throughout April and the early part of May. New potatoes are also moving in Louisiana, Florida, California and other spring producing states.

This year's crop is expected to be a record. Early spring production in the Florida and Lower Rio Grande Valley alone will reach about 4,658,000 bushels--about 58 percent above the early spring crop in these areas last year and 60 percent above the average for the ten years from 1935 to 1944. It's too early to estimate the total supply from the later areas, but farmers are planting more than 200,000 acres for late spring and 125,000 for summer harvest. The yield per acre this year is also turning out quite large, and total 1946 potato production is well on the way toward exceeding last year's 65 million bushel crop.

The good crop this year gives potatoes an opportunity to repeat their famous role of famine fighter. This time, of course, it won't be the potatoes themselves which feed millions of hungry people in the starvation areas. Potatoes will play a supporting role while bread takes the spotlight. But that supporting role is very important because it helps bread to give a better performance.

The more potatoes homemakers serve, the less bread they'll need to keep their meals on a high nutritional level. And it's easy to serve more potatoes when both old and new ones are available to provide variety of presentation.

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TOMATO LORE

In a very short time tomato supplies will be liberal. The season is getting underway fast in southern producing areas. Tomatoes are usually picked when they are pink or a mature green. They ripen in transit as they move in 30-pound lug boxes to wholesalers, who frequently repack them in one-pound individually wrapped cartons before servicing retailers.

Ready for consumers, top quality tomatoes are firm but not overripe. They should be fairly well formed, plump, smooth, of good color, and free from

blemish. Homemakers, however, should discriminate between blemishes that affect the quality of the tomato and those that affect only the appearance. Tomatoes that are rough or irregular in shape may not be attractive but can be used for many purposes with very little waste. Tomatoes having growth cracks will seldom keep long but are fit for immediate consumption. Puffy or watery tomatoes usually have poor flavor. Catfaces--or scars around the blossom end--involve some waste but do not usually affect the entire tomato.

As to food value, tomatoes run the gamut of the vitamin alphabet. Besides vitamin C, on which they built their reputation, tomatoes supply A, B₁, G, and the pellagra-preventive factor. Tomatoes contain enough acid to be rich in vitamin C even after they're cooked or canned. Perhaps that's why they are the most widely consumed of all canned vegetables.

The popularity of tomatoes as a food in any form, however, is a modern development--not more than 150 years old. Because the plant is a member of the deadly night shade family (to which, incidentally, Irish potatoes, eggplant, and peppers also belong)--the tomato for many centuries was thought to be poisonous.

Of tropical American origin (probably Peru), the tomato was introduced into Spain early in the 16th century. From Spain, tomatoes drifted to Morocco, to Italy, and then to France, where they were called "pommes d'armour" or "love apples". Then they traveled to England, where the plant was grown extensively for ornamental purposes in the 17th century.

Not until the end of the 18th century were tomatoes grown on a field scale and used for food. First word of this came from Italy. It was half a century later before people in the United States generally dared to eat tomatoes--and then, tradition has it, an Italian engraver living in Newport, Rhode Island, introduced the custom. To this day, the home of Michael Phelix Corn  is preserved as a shrine because by daring to eat tomatoes when everybody else

shied away from them he proved they were not poisonous.

From poison to ornament to vegetable is a long road to travel in 150 years. Today, there is no question of the place tomatoes hold among America's favorite foods, but sometimes a controversy arises as to whether they should be called fruits or vegetables.

Logally, at least, this question was settled by the Supreme Court of the United States in May 1893. A New York importer brought in a supply of tomatoes from the West Indies, and immediately became involved with the collector of customs about payment of duty. As fruits, the tomatoes would not be subject to the tariff act; as vegetables they were. A lower court ruled in favor of the collector of customs, who claimed they were vegetables; the importer appealed. The Supreme Court upheld the lower court's decision on the ground that most people think of tomatoes as vegetables and use them as vegetables, and hence they are vegetables--at least as far as the tariff act is concerned.

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FRUIT SELECTIONS

Grapefruit and oranges show no sign of being displaced as the best fruit buy on the market for some time to come. The season is well past its peak, but supplies are still fairly good and prices more reasonable than on the few other fruits that are available.

The strawberry season is rapidly moving northward. The peak is over in Louisiana and Texas, and movement from Arkansas is well underway with berries from the Ozarks supplying most markets now. Local strawberries are being harvested as far north as Missouri, placing homemakers in the northern fringe of the seven-state southwest area in the good supply position heretofore enjoyed mostly by shoppers in extreme southern areas.

Several other fruits are available, but not in sufficient quantity or at low enough prices to be listed among the best buys. Among these are bananas and

limes from Mexico, pineapples from Cuba, avacados and lemons from California.

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FISH SUPPLIES

Although fishing operations were cut short during Easter week, production held up well and supplies of most kinds are still plentiful, according to the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service in New Orleans.

As has been the case for several weeks, some of the more popular varieties of fresh fish remain scarce, but recent landings as a whole have been about normal and homemakers should find plenty of the less well-known fish available. Many of these varieties would be as popular as red snapper and trout if they were given an opportunity to display their excellent taste and high food value in conjunction with some of the currently plentiful vegetables.

As for shellfish, the season on oysters is slipping away as April comes to a close. Volume of production failed to hold up during the past week as the usual seasonal slump became noticeable. Good supplies of crabs are still available, although production failed by fifty percent to meet last week's totals.

Shrimp were landed in greater numbers in Louisiana, but supplies decreased in Texas and Mississippi and the week's catch showed little change further east along the Alabama shore line.

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